

**To:** Way, Steven[way.steven@epa.gov]; Smith, Paula[Smith.Paula@epa.gov]  
**Cc:** Ostrander, David[Ostrander.David@epa.gov]; Hestmark, Martin[Hestmark.Martin@epa.gov]  
**From:** Jenkins, Laura Flynn  
**Sent:** Tue 10/27/2015 3:59:08 PM  
**Subject:** RE: AP Followup Questions

Thanks, I'll get to Nancy for consolidation with Laura/Sandy's responses from yesterday.

Laura Jenkins

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**From:** Way, Steven  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 27, 2015 9:15 AM  
**To:** Smith, Paula  
**Cc:** Ostrander, David; Hestmark, Martin; Jenkins, Laura Flynn  
**Subject:** Re: AP Followup Questions

Here are answers to the questions regarding the emails:

1. The piezometer discussion in the emails attached by the AP reporter has nothing to do with Gold king mine. The piezometer was ordered for the Red and Bonita bulkhead, which was being constructed at the same time as the work at the Gold King.

2. The emails that refer to the Gold King on August 3 had to do with scheduling the meeting with DRMS, EPA-OSC onsite, and ER for that week.

3. The reference to "uncertainty" of the OSC regarding the Gold King mine had to do with my plan to have the USBR engineer provide an independent review of the approach. I had started the effort through our IAg process in the early spring, which was delayed due to the renewal process between the Region, the HQ-service center, and USBR. I have routinely throughout my career on mine-site projects with significant engineering consideration requested USBR input / review of plans.

4. The work to expose the bedrock above the Gold King adit was considered to be a valuable part of the investigation to allow the technical team to determine if the rest of the plan to open the mine was feasible as conceived. This was viewed as reasonable step, consistent with the plan, and in the preparation for the meeting. It was intended to be accomplished without disturbing the blockage.

Steve

Sent from my iPad

On Oct 23, 2015, at 12:28 PM, Smith, Paula <[Smith.Paula@epa.gov](mailto:Smith.Paula@epa.gov)> wrote:

David and Steve- Your help on question 3 please.

**- Paula**

**From:** Grantham, Nancy

**Sent:** Friday, October 23, 2015 12:22 PM

**To:** Cohen, Nancy; Hestmark, Martin; Smith, Paula; StClair, Christie

**Subject:** FW: AP Followup Questions

Hi all –

The first 2 questions are likely answered by the q and a being revised now by Region 8 and OSWER –

We need to work on a response to question 3.

Thanks ng

**From:** Brown, Matthew [mailto:MBrown@ap.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 23, 2015 1:24 PM  
**To:** StClair, Christie <StClair.Christie@epa.gov>  
**Cc:** Grantham, Nancy <Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov>; Elliott, Dan <delliott@ap.org>  
**Subject:**

Hi Christie-

As discussed, looking for more information on following items:

1. Further details on the decision not to use a drill rig to check water conditions inside Gold King. Specifically, please provide any cost estimate(s) of using a drill rig at the site, an explanation of how timing was a factor, details of what safety and technical issues were at play.
2. Regarding the Bureau of Reclamation's Technical Evaluation of the Gold King spill, pages 44 and 45 include mention of communications between the EPA OSC and BOR's Mike Gobla. The OSC apparently told Mr. Gobla he was "unsure about the plans for the Gold King Mine" and requested an outside review of the EPA?DRMS plans. Prior to a planned meeting with Mr. Gobla on Aug. 14, according to the report, work at the mine began. The report also mentions the EPA OSC going on vacation. What was the OSC unsure about? Why did the work begin prior to the planned meeting with BOR? How the OSC's upcoming vacation factor in to all this?
3. Attachment to this message is an email chain that discusses purchase of a piezometer, presumably for testing water pressure. Was this intended for use at Gold King mine? Was it obtained? Was it used? If so, what were the results? Would it be used in conjunction with drilling a bore hole or is that not necessary?

Thanks as always for the help.

Matt Brown

**Matthew Brown**

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**From:** StClair, Christie [<mailto:StClair.Christie@epa.gov>]

**Sent:** Thursday, October 22, 2015 6:59 PM

**To:** Brown, Matthew; Elliott, Dan

**Cc:** Grantham, Nancy

**Subject:** Making sure you have this

Matt and Dan, just making sure you had the additional statement from Nancy on the drill rig. As you know, our internal report has greater detail on how the site conditions affected this decision.

Please attribute to Nancy Grantham:

Regarding the decision by EPA not to use a drill rig to bore into the Gold King Mine (GKM) from above and directly determine the level of the mine pool, EPA's GKM Internal Review Team found that site conditions made it difficult to undertake such drilling to determine pressure within the mine. The Review Team identified technical challenges, safety, timing, and cost as factors in considering this technique—and also identified the steepness and instability of slopes at the site as a key safety consideration.

Thanks,

Christie

Off the record - We would also call to your attention to pg 69, 3rd paragraph, of the DOI report which concludes that "eventually even if no action had been taken, it may have failed on its own.

**Christie St. Clair**

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